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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

SATURDAY, June 18, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "NEWS NOTES FROM WASHINGTON." Information from the Bureau of Public Roads and the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

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This week our correspondent at the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C. sends a letter of road and highway news.

"Maybe you've been wondering," she writes, "whether all this safety teaching which the schools have been giving has had much of an effect. The Bureau of Public Roads says it has -- decidedly. The Bureau's recent study of traffic accidents says this in figures. From 1926 to 1935 since the schools have taken up safety teaching, child deaths in traffic have come down 18 percent. But during the same period deaths of their elders -- adult deaths in traffic have gone up 91 percent. The greatest safety gains have been among grammar school children who have had the most safety education. But youngsters under school age have not been trained as a group to keep off the streets and their death rate is still high. The Bureau suggests that high schools need training courses for drivers to carry on the safety idea among boys and girls in their teens who are about to begin driving.

"Here's an interesting fact brought to light recently. Cities have been getting the blame for more traffic deaths than they are responsible for. The reason is that people injured by automobiles on country roads have been brought to city hospitals where they often died. The Bureau of Census corrected this mistake and in 1934 showed that two-thirds of the people who died had their accidents on rural highways. In 1936 the death totals came to 11 thousand 800 in cities, and 26 thousand in the country.

"Since summer is the great motoring season of the year, you may be especially interested in a new aid to safety education -- a new Department of Agriculture pamphlet called 'Guides to Traffic Safety.' The National Conference on Street and Highway Safety prepared this leaflet. In it you can read the best methods known today for traffic safety. You can get a copy of 'Guides to Traffic Safety' by writing to the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C. and asking for it.

"Borrowers beware. Accidents befall the loaned car. This is another fact brought to light by the Bureau of Public Roads study. Borrowing and lending of automobiles is not a safety first measure, the Bureau finds. On the average, borrowing helps to build up the record of wrecked cars and of deaths and injuries in traffic accidents.

"The case histories of more than 800 fatal highway accidents -- accidents of passenger cars -- show that more than 25 percent of the drivers were listed as 'friend of the owner.' And only about 4 percent were listed as 'employee of the

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owner.' And only about 4 percent were 'relative of the owner.' Most of the 'friend' drivers were borrowers, and borrowers seem to have more than their share of accidents. This is partly because the 'friends' are not familiar with the borrowed car. But the Bureau suggest also that borrowers as a class are not so responsible as car owners. I guess Shakespeare was right. Didn't he say: 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be'?

"Here's a little news about gasoline taxes, inspection fees and other such receipts. Maybe you've wondered what the grand total of this sort of revenue is. Well, gasoline tax law receipts netted 760 million 998 thousand dollars in 1937. In 1936 the total was 691 million 420 thousand dollars. Maybe you'd like to know, too, how much gasoline was used in 1937. It was over 19 billion gallons. Every State except Nebraska and Tennessee reported increases in gasoline used.

"Now a little news of another kind of road -- of the trails and roads that run through our national forests. About 65 thousand miles of roads and nearly 130 thousand miles of trails crisscross our 157 national forests and are kept up under the supervision of Uncle Sam's foresters. The foresters explain that forest highways are useful not only for public travel but also for forest fire protection and for carrying forest timber crops to market. The little roadways and trails allow millions of visitors to reach secluded spots in the forests for camping, hunting, fishing, picnicking and so on and they also help the foresters protect and develop our national forests. All roads and trails are planned in advance and work is done as the forests need it."

That concludes this week's letter from Washington. But don't forget that pamphlet our correspondent mentioned -- the one called "Guides to Traffic Safety." Write to the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C. for it.

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